

OCS moratorium on oil and gas activity was a big disappointment for Florida. Even through we know that the annual appropriations ritual to protect our sensitive coastal waters may not be the best way to operate, the lack of a long-term policy has forced us to take what we can get.

Floridians and millions of visitors to Florida strongly oppose opening up our coastal waters to oil and gas drilling—not just because of the tremendous risk of a spill to our environment, our beaches, and our tourist economy, but also because of the onshore infrastructure such drilling would spawn.

In the near term, we urge the full Appropriations Committee to restore the ban—and we will take our fight to this floor if necessary. For the longer term, it is time to develop a real solution to this annual problem, perhaps by passing H.R. 72, a bill that provides for good science, some degree of certainty, and a rational plan to determine if and where exploration can be done safely. Meanwhile, those who love Florida will fight to protect it.

GIVE JAPAN THE RAW DEAL

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, here we go again. Japan wants a compromise. Japan wants another last minute deal. Japan wants. Japan wants. Japan wants.

Ladies and gentlemen, from President Nixon through President Bush, Japan has been able to wriggle out from every crisis. Last month's trade deficit hit a record \$11.4 billion and Japan wants another last-minute deal.

Beam me up here. American jobs are going overseas. And we are giving Japan last-minute deals. I say give Japan the deal, the raw deal. The same raw deal they have been giving American workers for the last 40 years.

They have earned it. They deserve it. Think about it.

TIME FOR FREE MARKETS IN JAPAN

(Mr. FUNDERBURK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FUNDERBURK. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the other side is right. Japan has been playing Uncle Sam for a fool. Thirty-five years is long enough to wait for Japan to join the world of free markets. Every President since JFK has been baffled and frustrated by Japanese resistance to free trade. We have had decades of handshakes, smiles, and bows from Japanese leaders. Each time we have offered friendship they have offered arrogance. Each time we have offered compromise, they have built walls to protect their outmoded industries. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, if Japan will not honor the rules of free trade then America

must impose punitive tariffs on Tokyo's products and cars are only the tip of that iceberg. Mr. Speaker, I do not want a trade war, but if the Japanese keep their markets closed to North Carolina farmers, North Carolina textiles, and North Carolina technology, they can no longer have free access to our markets. It is time Tokyo got with the program. It is time the Japanese Government joined the 20th century.

ELIMINATE GIFTS FROM LOBBYISTS

(Mr. VOLKMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, as you all know, later on today we will be taking up the legislative appropriation bill. And it has been said by one of the earlier speakers there are cuts in that bill from what we have had previously. But in my opinion, there are not sufficient cuts. There is still too much spending. And I am going to be voting for some of the amendments that will cut further.

But one thing I find is that the Committee on Rules has not permitted the most important amendment that could have been offered to this bill and that is the Baldacci amendment, which would have said that Members of Congress who accept elaborate gifts from lobbyists, and who have those same lobbyists write their bills, could not get paid as a Member of Congress.

Why should they get paid when they are getting all the free gifts from the lobbyists? But the Committee on Rules, under the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] and the Republican majority, said, no, we are not going to permit that amendment. We are not going to have reform up here.

Ladies and gentlemen, this Republican majority is not really reform minded. And I am going to talk about that more in the special orders this afternoon.

PROTECT THE ROLE OF CONGRESS IN UNITED STATES-CUBA NEGOTIATIONS

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, today I will introduce legislation to ensure that Congress maintains its proper role in the realm of foreign relations with the Communist Dictator Castro.

In conjunction with similar legislation proposed by our Florida Senator MACK in the other Chamber, this bill will require that the President notify congressional leadership prior to any meetings with the Castro regime and that a timely report be made to the leadership with the results of any such negotiations.

With a situation as delicate as negotiations with one of the last Communist regimes left in the world, it is essential that Congress be kept aware of any attempts made by the administration to legitimize the Castro government.

Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that it is the prerogative of the President to conduct foreign affairs, it is also the responsibility of the President to keep Congress informed of his actions so that we might respond accordingly.

I am pleased that I am able to introduce this bill with bipartisan support and would especially like to thank my colleagues from Florida, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mr. DIAZ-BALART for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in making sure that the United States does not rush into a closer relationship with a Communist dictatorship without the elected representatives of the people being properly informed.

NO TAX BREAKS FROM THE POCKETS OF AMERICA'S SENIORS

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I came to Washington to serve as an independent voice for families from central Texas, not to march in lock-step formation for any political party. And in that independent spirit I must continue to express my concern about what is happening in this House on Medicare.

The Medicare trust fund is just that, it is something in which American seniors and American middle-class families have to trust. But unfortunately in this House it is being treated not as a trust fund but as a slush fund to fund additional tax breaks for the privileged few in our society.

Mr. Speaker, speaking independently, I have to say that it is strange, strange indeed, that at this point the same Republicans who criticized President Clinton now try to hide behind his latest attempt to get a balanced budget in their efforts to raid the Medicare trust fund.

And those of us who have been elected to independently speak up for our constituents are going to be here speaking out about the Medicare trust fund and saying, Do not reach into the pockets of America's seniors to fund a tax break for the privileged few.

PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE SCORED HIS BUDGET PROPOSAL

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, we welcomed the President a week and a night ago as he decided to join, rejoin, the national debate on the balanced budget. And he told us in a short address to the Nation that he was going to balance the budget. He would do it over 10 years.